

Meeting No. 1279

25 February 75

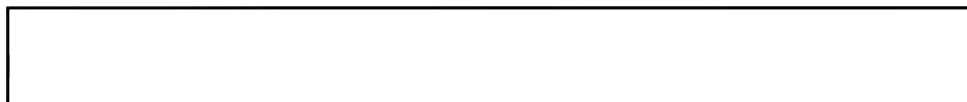
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NATIONAL INDICATIONS CENTER

DRAFT WATCH REPORT

for

WATCH COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION



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NIC DRAFT WATCH REPORT
of the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

No. 1278

18 February 1975

1 The Committee concludes that there will be
2 no military attack on the United States or
3 its overseas forces in the near future.

4 Subjects of immediate concern are discussed
5 below. [REDACTED]

6 [REDACTED]
7 I. Middle East

8 1. Cairo and Tel Aviv are continuing to weigh their
9 military and political options, in the hope of achieving
10 some agreement on an interim Middle East settlement during
11 next month's crucial negotiations. In the interim, we
12 believe it very unlikely that either the Arabs or Israelis
13 will deliberately initiate major offensive action, although
14 both sides remain militarily prepared to do so with very
15 little warning. [REDACTED]

16 II. USSR-Eastern Europe

17 2. The Soviet announcement that military exercises will
18 be held during March in the western USSR indicates that
19 major military activity is planned in that area. [REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED]
21 [REDACTED] Although the USSR has used such
22 announcements as cover for military operations, we believe
23 that, in this case, there will be bona fide maneuvers.

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25 III. Southeast Asia

26 3. In South Vietnam, heavy North Vietnamese attacks are
27 expected by the end of the month in scattered areas through-
28 out the country. A Communist attempt to capture Tay Ninh
29 Province appears to be in the offing and could at least
30 result in the isolation of Tay Ninh City. We believe,
31 however, that the South Vietnamese government will be able to
32 hold that vital city. [REDACTED]

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33 4. In Cambodia, the situation northwest of Phnom Penh and
34 along the Mekong River continues to deteriorate. Although
35 the government is being temporarily maintained by the air-
36 lift of essential supplies, use of the Mekong is still
37 required by the government for sustained livelihood. If
38 the Communists continue to control the river and are able to
39 close Pochentong airfield, it would almost certainly bring
40 about the fall of the Cambodian Republic. [REDACTED]

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BACKUPI. Middle EastISRAEL-ARAB STATES

1a. Cairo and Tel Aviv are in the process of critically evaluating their respective negotiating positions in the wake of Secretary Kissinger's visit. Although no agreement was announced, it appears that the two countries are closer to some interim accord on another Israeli withdrawal in the Sinai. In a 16 February statement to a Lebanese newspaper, Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmi stated that the Middle East is still very far from peace, but that there are indications that another Israeli withdrawal in both the Sinai and Golan is possible. Fahmi said that the withdrawal might take place on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts before the end of June. It was his opinion that the Geneva Conference would be convened shortly thereafter. Fahmi denied that there were any differences between Syria and Egypt in their approach to the problem of Israel and reiterated that the Syrians were not hostile to a new temporary agreement. This statement runs counter to a communique, issued by Damascus at the conclusion of Gromyko's recent visit to Syria, which called for an end to Kissinger's staged approach and an immediate return to Geneva. Fahmi also stated he expects that concrete peace proposals will be put forth next month during Secretary Kissinger's return visit to continue negotiations. [REDACTED]

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1b. In Tel Aviv, Prime Minister Rabin recognizes that his political survival depends upon the nature and outcome of an interim settlement with Cairo and Damascus. He has powerful domestic political incentives to maintain a tough bargaining posture until there is some assurance of Arab political concessions. In a 16 February statement, Rabin evaluated what, in his view, would happen when Kissinger returned to the Middle East in March. He stressed that Israel desires to reach an interim agreement, but not at any price. The next big problem facing Tel Aviv, if the present Egyptian-Israeli negotiations are fruitful, will be to focus on the possibility of a second withdrawal in the Golan Heights. The UN mandate to supervise the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement expires on 30 May, and it is doubtful that Syria will renew it unless there is progress toward an Israeli pullback. Tel Aviv sees the Golan Heights as a battlefield where the Syrians can be defeated before they reach Israel proper. The Israelis would view even a partial pullback as a threat to their ability to dominate this battlefield and there appears to be little room for compromise. Flexibility will probably not be introduced into the Israeli bargaining position until Syria becomes more conciliatory.

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BACKUPI. Middle EastSOVIET REACTIONS

Deliveries of Soviet military aid to Egypt by sea are apparently continuing. Although there have been references in the Western press to new arms agreements, we believe that the current deliveries of aircraft--including MIG-23s--are those specified under existing contracts which were reached prior to the October 1973 war. A Washington Post dispatch from Cairo of 16 February correctly identifies the three categories of equipment which Sadat has been seeking from the USSR--fulfillment of outstanding contracts, "replacement" for Egyptian losses in the 1973 war, and new arms to match the buildup of equipment in Israel and Syria since the war. Our best evidence is that the USSR thus far has agreed only to fulfill the outstanding contracts and that any new arms agreements will await Brezhnev's visit to Egypt, the date for which is now uncertain. The additional aircraft, which may include a couple of squadrons of MIG-23s as well as additional MIG-21s and SU-20s, will bolster Egyptian air capabilities but fall far short of Egyptian requests. The USSR's failure to meet Sadat's demands for additional and more sophisticated hardware limits Egyptian capabilities to conduct offensive operations against Israel.

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Turkey-Cyprus-Greece

The Turkish Cypriot administration announced the formation of a Turkish Cypriot Federal State on 12 February. The Greek Cypriots reacted by placing their forces on alert and, after a visit to Athens, sent a three-man delegation to the UN Security Council to appeal the "coup proclamation." President Makarios has stated that the Greek Cypriots would never accept partition of the island and that he would seek assistance from anyone, including the Soviet Union. After a meeting with Soviet Ambassador Astavin in Nicosia on 17 February, Makarios said that the USSR opposes the establishment of a bizonal federation because it would lead to partition. The Cyprus government denied that the Soviets will send 500 technicians and experts to Cyprus.

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BACKUPII. USSR-Eastern Europe

2a. The Soviet press on 16 February announced that: "In accordance with the armed forces combat training plan, troop exercises will be conducted in March this year in the central part of the European territory of the Soviet Union. The exercises will cover questions of the interaction of different categories of troops in accordance with tasks facing troops in 1975." Announcements of impending exercises in the USSR (as opposed to Warsaw Pact exercises in Eastern Europe) are unusual. In recent years, the USSR has announced in advance only such major exercises as "Dvina" (March 1970) and "Yug" (June 1971) and the series of ostensible "exercises" in the summer of 1968 which in fact served as the cover for the mobilization and deployment of Soviet forces for the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The prior announcement probably means that large-scale maneuvers, involving at least ground and air and probably missile and air defense forces, will be conducted during March, apparently in the general area of the Carpathian and Belorussian Military Districts.

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BACKUP

SINO-SOVIET BORDER

Soviet negotiator Ilichev has returned to Peking after an absence of six months, to resume talks with the Chinese on the border and other issues. We have received no dependable information as to the reason for his seemingly sudden return or whether it may indicate either an improvement or worsening in Sino-Soviet relations. Meanwhile, the annual convocation of the Sino-Soviet Border River Navigation Joint Committee apparently has been inexplicably delayed.

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BACKUP

III. Southeast Asia

VIETNAM

3b. In Military Region 1, reports indicate a possible readjustment of Communist areas of operation. Two regiments of the 325th NVA Division are reportedly turning over weapons and positions to local force units. Destinations of these regiments have not been disclosed, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A rallier report indicates that the 308th NVA Division has reentered Quang Tri Province and that one of its regiments will replace the 101st Regiment, 325th Division, which in turn is slated to move south to Thua Thien Province. Additional artillery and sapper elements have reportedly also moved to northern Thua Thien Province. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This activity, coupled with possible deployment of 325th Division elements to Thua Thien Province, suggests an increase in enemy activity in the area by late February which could lead to the isolation of the city of Hue. [REDACTED]

3c. In Military Region 2, [REDACTED] Communist plans to launch offensives around the end of February. Specifically, the 3d NVA Division will be responsible for cutting Route 19 in Binh Dinh Province, and an unidentified division (possibly the 968th) will interdict 19A in Kontum Province. These actions are reportedly designed to isolate the Central Highlands. [REDACTED]

3d. The threat to Tay Ninh City is increasing with the expected commitment of the 3d and 9th NVA Divisions in support of the Communist goal of "liberating" Tay Ninh Province. The GVN will probably be able to hold the city, but the Communists may succeed in isolating the city and interdicting the lines of communication in the area. [REDACTED]

3e. In Military Region 4, the 6th Regiment, 5th NVA Division, may have moved from its normal area of operations in Kien Tuong Province to Hong Ngu District, Kien Phong Province. If true, the move may be related to plans to secure a logistic route inside Vietnam and would also enable Communist forces to interdict Mekong River shipping. [REDACTED]

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BACKUP

III. Southeast Asia (cont'd)

CAMBODIA

4a. Pochentong airfield and Phnom Penh continue to receive sporadic artillery and rocket fire, but the airfield is still open for the accelerated resupply effort. If Communist forces capitalize on the critical situation in the 7th Division area northwest of the city, the threat to capital defenses will significantly increase. The 7th Division CP has been evacuated and the entire division area, as well as that of the neighboring 5th Division, continues to receive ground attacks and attacks by fire. [REDACTED] the Khmer Communists are well aware of FANK weaknesses in this area, and they can be expected to attempt to exploit the situation. Continued depletion of the 7th Division may force FANK to divert resources from the 3d Division area west and southwest of Pochentong, where two Communist divisions are located. These Communist units have not been committed to any extensive combat since mid-January. [REDACTED]

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4b. Farther to the north, government forces are moving from Battambang and Pursat in an attempt to relieve the besieged garrison at Muong Russei, which lies on Route 5 in a major rice-producing area. [REDACTED]

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4c. The Communists have cut Route 4 again between Kompong Speu and Phnom Penh, thereby reducing the government threat to their line of communication from the northwest. [REDACTED]

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4d. Along the lower Mekong, FANK positions on Peam Reang island have been lost to the enemy. The loss of this strategic position in the narrows below Neak Luong will further complicate government efforts to reopen the Mekong. Farther north along the river, government efforts to retake the choke point at Dei Doh have been abandoned for the time being. Government-held positions at Neak Luong and Banam are experiencing a substantial increase in attacks by fire. [REDACTED]

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